



HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL

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Heritage Parents,

Yesterday, during our traditional “Moving Up” assembly, a student speaker departed from his pre-approved comments. He referenced a number of perceived negative aspects of the school, telling underclassmen they will deal with these issues during high school. As the speech went on, the student referenced his perspective of a story heard which involved another student. His comments had many inaccuracies, inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated accusations.

Administrators called the student in afterward to explain how spreading rumors and inaccurate information was extremely problematic. We met with him at great length, discussing several options for a restorative resolution, or as a final option, if the student didn’t want to work towards a resolution, disciplinary options would be undertaken (per school district policy) that could include not walking at the upcoming graduation ceremony. After considering the options, he opted to not participate in graduation.

Following the conversation with the student, his parent came to speak with administration. Shortly thereafter, a social media account attributed to the student posted an offensive and blatantly false statement about the conversation that took place with his parent - a statement I whole-heartedly, categorically and emphatically refute.

Even when people speak about very real and serious problems in the world in which we live, if they add untruths about other people, including students and staff, it can be considered harassment and bullying. When untruthful comments are made in public forums, such as hallways, classrooms or assemblies, we need to be mindful of their potential effect on others, and have a duty to protect them.

The staff at Heritage High School is dedicated to ensuring the physical and emotional safety of our students. Depression, mental health, bullying, sexual assault, and the right to not be falsely accused of such, are all very valid concerns. We work hard at ensuring our students are physically and emotionally safe every day. We thank you for your support of your children and the school in that common goal.

Respectfully,

Derek Garrison, Principal
Heritage High School